

# IUCN SSC Freshwater Conservation Committee



SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE  
Twitter: @FW\_Conservation



**CO-CHAIR**

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**CO-CHAIR**

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**NUMBER OF MEMBERS**

15

**Mission statement**

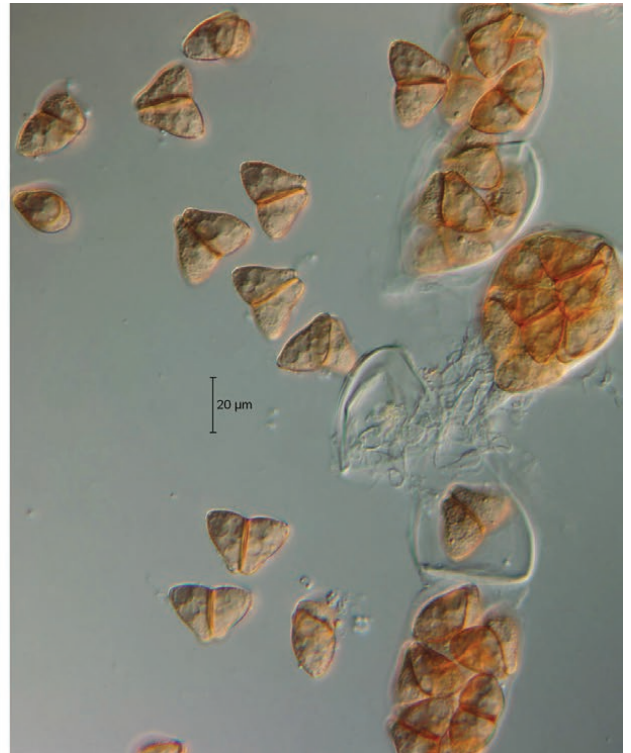
To raise the profile of freshwater biodiversity through: (1) coordinating freshwater species conservation activities through the SSC, highlighting emerging patterns and ensuring that increasing attention is given to issues concerning freshwater biodiversity conservation; (2) making freshwater recommendations to the SSC based on the work of the Freshwater Conservation Committee, and ensuring that freshwater species conservation issues are well represented within the SSC and the wider IUCN; (3) assisting the SSC by providing authority and credibility in its engagement with policy processes and major freshwater related events.

**Projected impact 2021–2025**

Through contributions to freshwater Red List assessments and subsequent analyses – and via linkage with freshwater-relevant Specialist Groups – the patterns of global threats to freshwater species will have been defined and the priorities for conservation (geographically and taxonomically) identified; communication, fundraising and action to conserve those species is underway; implement guidance for the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) such that freshwater habitats and species are included in National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).



Félix Feider, member of the FCC, at the NatureForAll Task Force panel discusión, 2021 World Conservation Congress  
Photo: Anna Heath (Synchronicity Earth)



The Little butterfly of the swamp (*Lepidopterella palustris*), a species of freshwater fungus included in the Fantastic Freshwater report  
Photo: Carol Shearer and Huzefa Raja

## Targets 2021–2025

### ASSESS

**T-006** Identify how/where Red List assessment data are being used by Specialist Groups.

### PLAN

**T-008** Review habitats, taxa and possibly geographical regions which are under-represented, set them as priorities, and address these gaps.

**T-009** Identify new projects where the Freshwater Conservation Committee can either directly engage with, or otherwise promote, freshwater conservation.

### ACT

**T-007** Identify priorities for development of new freshwater action plans, with a view to developing conservation action.

**T-010** Develop a programme of conservation evidence to show where there has been freshwater conservation success, and why.

**T-013** Promote freshwater conservation initiatives.

### NETWORK

**T-003** Broaden the membership of the Freshwater Conservation Committee to include younger members familiar with new social media technologies.

**T-004** Identify and work with IUCN Commission Specialist Groups, Task Forces, and Committees in Commissions to

share information on mutual objectives in freshwater, and ensure these objectives are well linked and build off each other.

**T-005** Promote freshwater outputs from SSC.

**T-011** Coordinate with key institutions and initiatives in identifying priorities for action, project development, fundraising, technical communications, etc.

**T-012** Ensure freshwater ecosystems are adequately represented in international, national and regional policy.

### COMMUNICATE

**T-001** Develop and implement a communication strategy about the importance of freshwater biodiversity globally.

**T-002** Communicate the importance of freshwater biodiversity globally to different audiences.

## Activities and results 2021

### PLAN

#### Planning

**T-009** (KSR 8)

**Number of conservation plans/strategies developed:** 0

**Result description:** As reported elsewhere, Monika Bohm has been working closely with SSC Specialist Groups in the development

of a new project, on the publication that will profile fifty freshwater species. Currently we do not have other new projects and strategies developed.

### NETWORK

#### Membership

**T-003** (KSR 3)

**Number of SSC members recruited:** 1

**Result description:** We have started discussions with Felix Feider (Synchronicity Earth), who works closely with various global youth movements for biodiversity. Felix will help us recruit youth members to the Freshwater Conservation Committee. He is already working closely with the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) Freshwater Specialist Group on a similar plan. He and his colleagues in the youth networks have drafted a strategy for youth engagement, which we can adopt in the Freshwater Conservation Committee.

#### Synergy

**T-004** (KSR 3)

**Number of collaborations:** 0

**Result description:** While we do not have specific products for this target thus far, we have been working closely with Monika Bohm at the Global Center for Species Survival, Indianapolis Zoo, in terms of identifying those SSC Specialist Groups with an interest in freshwater species. As reported

Javan Torrent Frog (*Wijayarana masonii*),  
Gunung Gede Pangrango National Park, Indonesia  
Photo: Topiltzin Contreras



Merganser (*Mergus merganser*) with chicks,  
Hulunbuir, China  
Photo: Topiltzin Contreras

elsewhere, Monika has been working closely with SSC Specialist Groups in the development of a forthcoming publication that will profile fifty freshwater species. Also as reported elsewhere, we have joined conversations with the Marine Conservation Society to discuss the formation of new SSC Groups or Task Forces that cut across Commissions, that bring together saline and freshwater interests. We also have Committee members who also represent freshwater groups in the Commission on Ecosystem Management (CEM) and WCPA. During 2022 we will focus on developing these links extensively, and more deeply. T-005 (KSR 3)

**Freshwater issues considered:** 5%

**Result description:** While we do not have specific products for this target thus far, we have been working closely with Monika Bohm at the Global Center for Species Survival, Indianapolis Zoo, in terms of identifying those SSC Specialist Groups with an interest in freshwater species. Monika has been working closely with Re:wild and Shoal Conservation in the development of a forthcoming publication that will profile fifty freshwater species. This has been done in consultation with multiple SSC Specialist Groups and will form the basis for future networking opportunities. We have also joined conversations with the Marine Conservation Society to discuss the formation of new SSC Groups or Task Forces that cut across Commissions, that bring together saline and freshwater interests; for example, a transitional wetland ecosystems group, covering coastal and estuarine areas. These discussions are related to a session held at the 2020 IUCN World Conservation Congress focused on 'Protecting aquascapes: integrating freshwater, estuarine and marine conservation' (<https://www.iucncongress2020.org/programme/official-programme/session-43443>). We have also discussed



Least Concern Mexican Tetra  
(*Astyanax mexicanus*)  
Photo: Topiltzin Contreras

the possibility of forming a Fisheries Group covering marine and freshwater fisheries. Co-Chairs Topis Contreras Macbeath and Ian Harrison have also discussed the possibility of creating a Brackish Inland Waters Group, and a Pools and Springs Group, to cover these inland ecosystems and their species that tend to get overlooked.

#### T-012 (KSR 4)

##### Number of governments supported to develop species conservation policies: 0

**Result description:** Specialist Group members have continued to provide feedback to the Post-2020 GBF consultation process. This has principally been via Co-Chair Ian Harrison, who has coordinated freshwater recommendations from the SSC Freshwater Conservation Committee to the Post-2020 GBF consultation. Comments have been submitted directly and provided to the SSC Post-2020 Biodiversity Targets Task Force, the WCPA Freshwater Specialist Group and WCPA Steering Committee, to the Global Species Programme in the IUCN Secretariat, to UN Water, and to similar efforts being led by WWF and The Nature Conservancy.

#### COMMUNICATE

##### Communication

#### T-002 (KSR 13)

##### Number of communication products using innovative tools: 15

**Result description:** Our activities on communicating the importance of freshwater biodiversity to different audiences were largely focused on contributions to the 2020 World Conservation Congress. Committee members contributed to nine sessions at the Forum, including planning, leading or co-leading some of them. Committee member Adjany Costa was part of the distinguished panel invited to the 'Freshwater Closing Plenary: Global Action to Conserve Freshwater'. Other sessions to which we contributed include: 'The Global Biodiversity Framework and freshwater ecosystems: Moving to

implementation', 'Rethinking freshwater ecosystem protection and management', 'Protecting aquascapes: integrating freshwater, estuarine and marine conservation', and 'Scaling up – expanding action on the global crisis facing freshwater biodiversity'. Committee members also contributed significantly to a 'Freshwater Conservation Action Café' organised by IUCN Water and Global Species Programme. Aside from the main sessions of the Forum, we also contributed to a 'Dialogue session' on 'Fish Tales: Narratives for Freshwater Conservation' held at the Reimagine Pavilion and organised by Synchronicity Earth, and a session titled 'Assess-Plan-Act to Reverse the Red within SSC', at SSC's Reverse the Red Pavilion. We also assisted in planning a Press Conference on the Rights of Rivers, and a press conference on the World premiere of the documentary *The Roar of the Marañón (El Rugir del Marañón)*, which was associated with the Motion on the Protection of Andes-Amazon rivers of Peru, noted below). Committee members contributed to the drafting of at least four freshwater themed motions that were passed as Resolutions: WCC-2020-Res-008 *Protecting rivers and their associated ecosystems as corridors in a changing climate*, WCC-2020-Res-018 *Valuing and protecting inland fisheries*, WCC-2020-Res-111 *Protection of Andes-Amazon rivers of Peru: the Marañón, Ucayali, Huallaga and Amazonas, from large-scale infrastructure projects*, and WCC-2020-Res-134 *Protecting the Lower Congo River from large hydro-electric dam developments*. Besides individual publications by Committee members, there were several large, international, collaborative manuscripts published in 2021 that included participation by at least two Committee members. These include: Harper, M., et al. (2021). 'Twenty-five essential research questions to inform the protection and restoration

of freshwater biodiversity'. *Aquatic Conservation: Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems* 31(9):2632–2653. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aqc.3634>; Maasri, A., et al. (2022). 'A global agenda for advancing freshwater biodiversity research'. *Ecology Letters* 25:255–263. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ele.13931>; Wiedenfeld, D.A., et al. (2021). 'Conservation resource allocation, small population resiliency, and the fallacy of conservation triage'. *Conservation Biology* 35(5):1388–1395. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.13696>.

#### Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Synchronicity Earth and Conservation International for providing support for Co-Chair Ian Harrison to work on Committee activities.

#### Summary of achievements

**Total number of targets 2021–2025: 13**

**Geographic regions: 13 Global**

**Actions during 2021:**

Plan: 1 (KSR 8)

Network: 4 (KSR 2, 3, 4)

Communicate: 1 (KSR 13)

**Overall achievement 2021–2025:**

